DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 652 JC 000 606

TITLE	Evaluation of Financial Aid Services at NVCC. Research Report.
INSTITUTION	Northern Virginia Community Coll., Annandale. Office of Institutional Research.
REPORT NO	NVCC-OIR-RR-10-00
PUB DATE	2000-03-00
NOTE	32p.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Ancillary School Services; Community Colleges; Financial Aid Applicants; *Need Analysis (Student Financial Aid); *Paying for College; *Student Financial Aid; Student Financial Aid Officers; Student Personnel Services; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Northern Virginia Community College

ABSTRACT

The report presents the findings of the Financial Aid Services Survey at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). The survey sought to determine student satisfaction with financial aid services at both the College Financial Aid Office and the campus Financial Aid Information Services. More than 1,700 students who had been in contact with financial aid services at NVCC between fall 1998 and summer 1999 responded to the survey. Findings from the survey indicate that the most frequently mentioned source of aid was a grant (67%). Over 30% of the respondents indicated they received information about financial aid from College publications, and 30% indicated they received their information from College staff. The most common reasons for the students to call financial aid services were to check on the status of their aid request (63%) or to check on the application procedure (57%). Fifty-three percent of the respondents had visited the College Financial Aid Office at least once. Students rated their overall experience with financial aid services at NVCC as either good (47%) or excellent (35%). Of the 813 students who reported dissatisfaction with the financial aid service, the greatest proportion (27%) was dissatisfied with the financial aid application process. (JA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 444 652

EVALUATION OF FINANCIAL AID SERVICES AT NVCC

Research Report No. 10-00

Office of Institutional Research

Northern Virginia Community College

March 2000

© NVCC-OIR, March 2000

S C. Werner

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Research is to conduct analytical studies and provide information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NVCC community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

DIRECTOR

Dr. George E. Gabriel

STAFF MEMBERS

Margret Chang

Johan Dennett

Louise Herzfeld

Consuelo Heyman

Linda Hoffman

Nadezhda Osmanova

4001 Wakefield Chapel Road

Annandale, VA 22003-3796

(703) 323-3129

http://www.nv.cc.va.us/oir

www.nv.cc.va.us/oir

EVALUATION OF FINANCIAL AID SERVICES AT NVCC

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

Section I: Students' Aid Status

Section II: Printed Information about Financial Aid

Section III: Telephone Services Provided By The Financial Aid Office

Section IV: Walk-in Services, College Financial Aid Office – Forbes Place

Section V: Walk-in Services, Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Comparison of College and Campus Walk-in Financial Aid Services

Section VI: Overall Evaluation of Financial Aid Services

Section VII: A Comparison Of Satisfaction Ratings Between Students Who Received And Did Not Receive Financial Aid

Conclusion

Appendix

EVALUATION OF FINANCIAL AID SERVICES AT NVCC

List of Tables

Table 1: Types of Financial Aid

Table 2: Source of Financial Aid Information

Table 3: Number of Telephone Calls to the Financial Aid Office

Table 4: Reasons for the Telephone Calls to the Financial Aid Office

Table 5: Preference for Receiving Financial Aid Information

Table 6: Difficulty Contacting the College Financial Aid Office By Telephone

Table 7: Difficulty Contacting the Campus Financial Aid Information Service By Telephone

Table 8: Difficulties Contacting the Financial Aid Office

Table 9: Rating of the Helpfulness of Staff in Answering Telephone Calls

Table 10: Times Visited the College Financial Aid Office

Table 11: Waiting Time, College Financial Aid Office

Table 12: Reasons for Visiting the College Financial Aid Office

Table 13: Rating of the Helpfulness of Staff in Answering Students' Concerns, College Financial Aid Office

Table 14: Visits to a Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Table 15: Waiting Time, Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Table 16: Reasons for Visiting a Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Table 17: Rating of the Helpfulness of Staff in Answering Students' Concerns, Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Table 18: Rating of the Overall Experience With the NVCC's Financial Aid Service

Table 19: Dissatisfaction With Services

Table 20: Understanding Financial Aid-Related Procedures

Table 21: College Web Services Used

Table 22: Satisfaction Ratings For Students Who Received Financial Aid

Table 23: Satisfaction Ratings For Students Who Did Not Receive Financial Aid

List of Figures

Figure 1: Types of Financial Aid

Figure 2: Source of Financial Aid Information

Figure 3: Reasons for the Telephone Calls to the Financial Aid Office

Figure 4: Preference for Receiving Financial Aid Information

Figure 5: Reasons for Visiting the College Financial Aid Office

Figure 6: Rating of Helpfulness of Staff, College Financial Aid Office

Figure 7: Reasons for Visiting a Campus Financial Aid Information Service

EVALUATION OF FINANCIAL AID SERVICES AT NVCC

Executive Summary

One thousand seven hundred and seven (1,707) students who had been in contact with financial aid services at NVCC, between fall 1998 and summer 1999, responded to a student satisfaction survey on financial aid services. The Financial Aid Services Survey sought to determine student satisfaction with a variety of services and information provided by NVCC's financial aid services at both the College Financial Aid Office and the campus Financial Aid Information Services. Students were asked from where they got financial aid information and about the telephone and walk-in services they received from financial aid services. Students were also asked to evaluate staff helpfulness and their overall experience with financial aid services at NVCC.

Findings from the survey indicate that students received a variety of financial aid, however, the most frequently mentioned source of aid was a grant (67%). Many students received more than one form of aid. Fourteen percent of the respondents said they applied for aid but did not receive any. Less than one percent of the respondents did not apply for any aid.

While students received information about financial aid from a variety of sources, over 30% of the respondents indicated they received information about financial aid from College publications and 30% indicated they received their information from College staff. Very few students received information from a College orientation course (62 students, 4%) or a telephone request (70 students, 4%).

Well over half of the respondents (56%) had telephoned NVCC's financial aid services between 1 and 3 times in the past year. The most common reasons for the students to call financial aid services were to check on the status of their aid request (63%) or to check on the application procedure (57%). In addition, over 30% of the students called to get help in completing the financial aid application. Less than 1% of the students called to seek debt management counseling.

The majority of respondents indicated that they would prefer to receive financial aid information either in person (by appointment) (67%) or by telephone (57%). Thirty-one percent would prefer to receive financial aid information via written communication. Interactive methods of receiving information were less popular with the respondents than the more traditional methods of communicating. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents indicated they would prefer to receive information via e-mail and only 5% responded that they would prefer to receive information through an interactive student information kiosk.

The majority of respondents indicated they had no difficulty in getting through, by telephone, to either the College Financial Aid Office (75%) or the campus Financial Aid Information Service (75%). Almost 25% of those students who reported difficulty getting through to the College Financial Aid Office or the campus Financial Aid Information Service said they received a recorded message and could not get through to a staff member. Twenty-four percent of the respondents said they were kept on hold for too long.

Respondents rated the financial aid staff's helpfulness in answering questions by telephone as either good (44%) or excellent (32%).

Over half (53%) of the respondents had visited the College Financial Aid Office at least once. Only 6% said they did not have to wait to be seen, while 45% said they waited less than 5 minutes. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents said the reason for their visit was to check on the application procedure. Respondents rated the financial aid staff's helpfulness as either good (42%) or excellent (42%).

Over 76% of the respondents indicated they had visited Financial Aid Information Services, at a campus location, at least once. Half of the respondents reported either no waiting time (6%) or waiting less than 5 minutes (44%). The main reason that students visited the campus Financial Aid Information Service was to check on the application procedure (59%). Respondents rated the campus financial aid staff's helpfulness as good (42%) or excellent (41%).

Students rated their overall experience with financial aid services at NVCC as either good (47%) or excellent (35%). Of the 813 students who reported dissatisfaction with a financial aid service, the greatest proportion (27%) was dissatisfied with the financial aid application process. When asked about the financial aid procedures they understood, two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they understood how and when to apply for financial aid. A small proportion of the respondents used College web services for financial aid. Eighteen percent of the students had applied for financial aid over the web and less than 1% had used the web to check on the availability of work study positions (0.6%) or register with the Selective Service Administration (0.4%).

Whether the students were receiving financial aid or not appeared to impact their satisfaction ratings of both staff helpfulness and their overall satisfaction with financial aid services. There

was a higher degree of satisfaction with financial aid services among those students who received financial aid compared to those who did not receive financial aid. A greater proportion of students who did not receive financial aid rated financial aid staff's helpfulness and their overall experience with financial aid as fair or poor.

EVALUATION OF FINANCIAL AID SERVICES AT NVCC

Introduction

In fall 1999 the Office of Institutional Research, with the cooperation of the College Financial Aid Office, conducted a survey of student satisfaction with financial aid services at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). The financial aid study was conducted as a part of the College effort to evaluate its educational support services.

The Financial Aid Services Survey was divided into six sections. The six sections asked questions concerning the students' aid status, where students got their printed material about financial aid and the telephone services students received. In addition, information was sought on the walk-in services provided at the College Financial Aid Office at Forbes Place and the campus Financial Aid Information Service. The final section of the survey asked respondents to give an overall evaluation of financial aid services at NVCC. Survey comments were compiled and provided to the College Financial Aid Office for review.

This report presents the findings of the Financial Aid Services Survey. The report is divided into seven sections. Section I discusses the students' aid status. Section II analyzes the sources of information from which students received financial aid information. Section III reports on the telephone services that students received from financial aid services. Sections IV and V present information on the walk-in services provided to students at the College Financial Aid Office and the campus Financial Aid Information Service. Section VI presents the findings of the students' overall evaluation of financial aid services. Section VII gives a comparison of satisfaction ratings between those students who received financial aid and those students who did not.

In fall 1999, the Financial Aid Services Survey was sent to 8,500 NVCC students who were documented as having had contact with the financial aid services at NVCC (College or campus office) between fall 1998 and summer 1999. One thousand seven hundred and seven (1,707) survey responses were returned and analyzed, yielding a 20% response rate.

Section I: Students' Aid Status

The first question on the Financial Aid Services Survey addressed the students' aid status. Students were asked about the type of financial aid they received. As some students received more than one type of financial aid, multiple responses to the question were allowed.

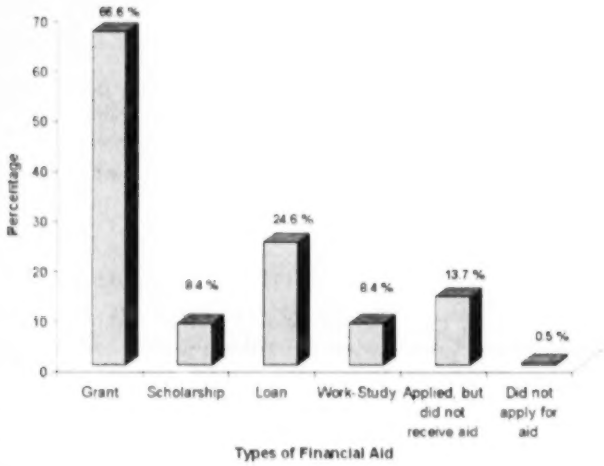
Of the 1,707 students who responded to the survey, two-thirds (1,136 students, 67%) received a grant, 25% received a loan and 14% applied but did not receive aid. In addition, 8% of the respondents received work-study aid and 8% received scholarships. Less than 1% (0.5%) said they did not apply for any financial aid (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1: Types of Financial Aid

Type of Financial Aid	Number
Grant	1,136 (66.6%)
Scholarship	144 (8.4%)
Loan	420 (24.6%)
Work-study	145 (8.4%)
Applied, but did not receive aid	234 (13.7%)
Did not apply for aid	9 (0.5%)

* Students may receive more than 1 type of financial aid

Figure 1: Types of Financial Aid



Section II: Printed Information about Financial Aid

Students were asked to indicate from where they received information about financial aid. As it was likely that students would receive their information about financial aid from more than one source, multiple responses to the question were allowed.

Students indicated they received information from a variety of sources. The two main sources from which students indicated they received printed information about financial aid were from College publications (31%) and from College staff (30%). A small percentage of students said they received financial aid information from such sources as a high school college night/orientation program (13%), the College website (9%) and the student information kiosk (10%). Very few students received information from a College orientation course (62 students, 4%) or a telephone request (70 students, 4%).

A complete listing of all the student choices and the percent responding is presented in Table 2. Figure 2 shows the top-six sources of financial aid information.

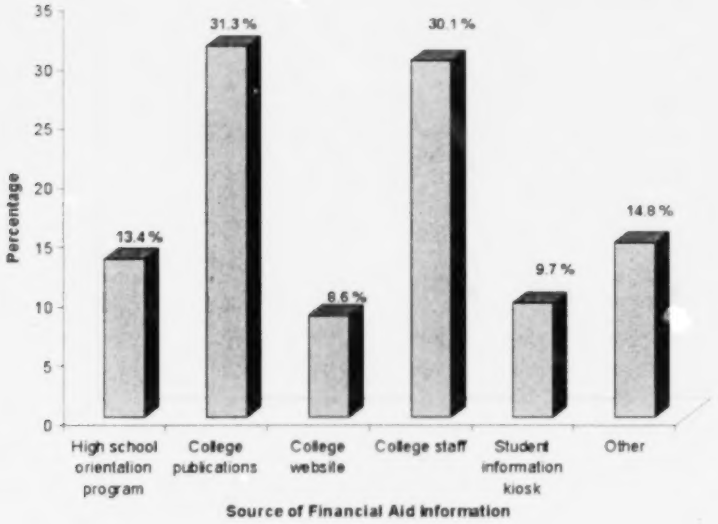
Table 2: Source of Financial Aid Information

Source of Financial Aid Information	Number
High school college night/orientation	228 (13.4%)
College publications	534 (31.3%)
College website	147 (8.6%)
College staff, i.e. Counselor	513 (30.1%)
Student information kiosk	166 (9.7%)
Telephone request	70 (4.1%)
College orientation course	62 (3.6%)
Scholarship bulletin board	113

	(6.6%)
Other	253 (14.8%)

* Students may have received information from more than one source

Figure 2: Source of Financial Aid Information *



* Figure 2 shows the top six sources of financial aid information

Section III: Telephone Services Provided By The Financial Aid Office

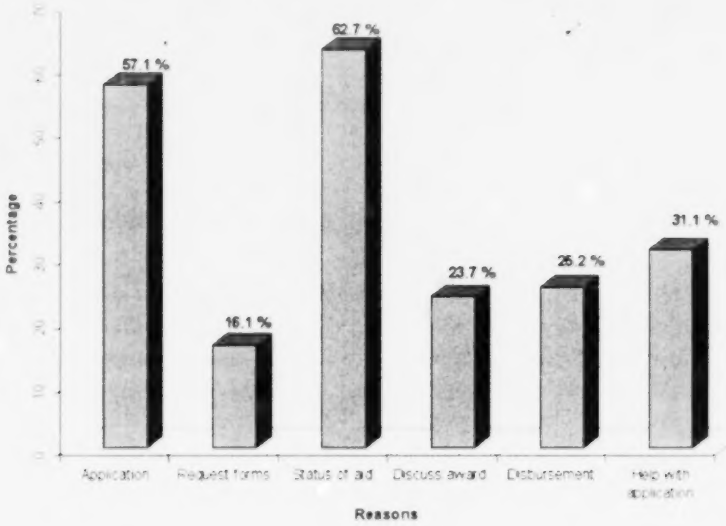
In the Telephone Services section of the Financial Aid Services Survey, students were asked about the telephone services they had received from financial aid services, regardless of whether the services were received at the College Financial Aid Office or at a campus location. Specifically, the students were asked how many times they or a family member had telephoned the financial aid office in the past year. Fifty-six percent of those students responding to the question indicated they had telephoned the financial aid office between one to three times, an additional 24% had telephoned the office four or more times. Twenty-one percent of the respondents had not telephoned the financial aid office at all (Table 3).

Table 3: Number of Telephone Calls to the Financial Aid Office

Number of Telephone Calls	Respondents	
	#	%
None	318	20.8
One to three	850	55.5
Four or more	363	23.7
Total	**1,531**	**100.0**

Students were asked to indicate their reasons for telephoning the financial aid office. There were many reasons why students called the financial aid office and students may have called multiple times for a variety of reasons. Overall, however, those students who called indicated two main reasons for their call(s). Sixty-three percent of the students called the financial aid office to check on the status of their aid request and 57% called to check on the application procedure. Other reasons that prompted students to call the financial aid office were to get help with the financial aid application (31%), to check on the disbursement of financial aid (25%) and to discuss their award package or denial (24%) (Table 4 and Figure 3).

Figure 3: Reasons for the Telephone Calls to the Financial Aid Office *



* Figure 3 shows the top six reasons for telephone calls to the Financial Aid Office.

Table 4: Reasons for the Telephone Calls to the Financial Aid Office*

Reasons for Telephone Calls	Number
Check on application procedure	693 (57.1%)
Request forms	195 (16.1%)
Check on status of aid request	761 (62.7%)
Discuss award package or denial	288 (23.7%)
Seek information on work-study employment	73 (6.0%)
Request scholarship information	80 (6.6%)
Check on status of appeal	109 (9.0%)
Complete loan counseling	81 (6.7%)
Seek debt management counseling	7 (0.6%)
Request a Financial Aid Transcript	78 (6.4%)
Check on disbursement of financial aid	306 (25.2%)
Get help in completing the financial aid application	377 (31.1%)

* Students may have called for more than one reason or may have called multiple times or both

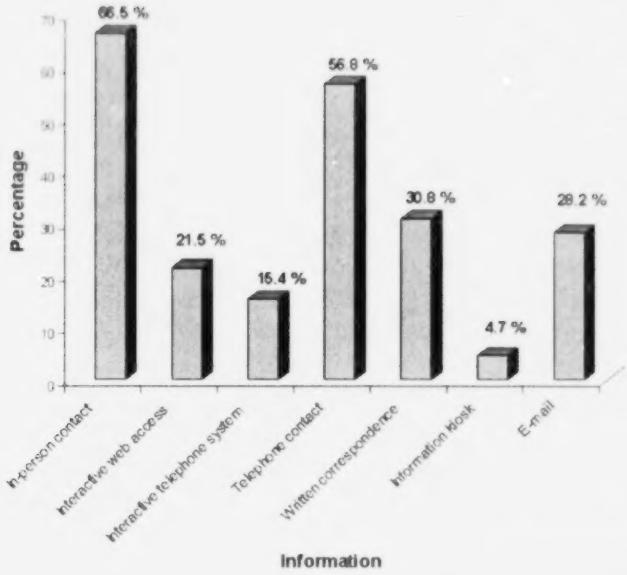
Students were asked how they would prefer to receive the financial aid information they requested from the financial aid office. Multiple responses to this question were allowed. Of those survey respondents who called the financial aid office, 67% said they would prefer to receive their financial aid information through in-person contact. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents said they would prefer to receive their financial aid information by telephone and 31% indicated that written correspondence was a preferred method of receiving financial aid information. Only 28% of the respondents indicated that e-mail request and response was a preferred method of receiving financial aid information. Interactive methods of receiving financial aid information were favored by relatively small percentages of respondents. Only 22% of the students chose interactive web access as a preferred method, 15% chose an interactive phone system and 5% chose an interactive student kiosk (Table 5 and Figure 4).

Table 5: Preference for Receiving Financial Aid Information*

Preference for Receiving Financial Aid Information	Number
Through in-person contact/appointment	806 (66.5%)
Through interactive web access	261 (21.5%)
Through interactive telephone system	187 (15.4%)
By telephone contact	689 (56.8%)
Through written correspondence	374 (30.8%)
Through interactive student information kiosk	56 (4.7%)
By e-mail request and response	342 (28.2%)

* Students may have more than one preference

Figure 4: Preference for Receiving Financial Aid Information



The survey asked students if they had any difficulty getting through by telephone to the College Financial Aid Office. The majority of students (75%) who responded to this question reported that they had no difficulty contacting the College Financial Aid Office by phone. Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated they did have difficulty in contacting the College Financial Aid Office by phone (Table 6).

Table 6: Difficulty Contacting the College Financial Aid Office By Telephone

Difficulty Contacting the College Financial Aid Office By Telephone	Respondents	
	#	%
No	842	75.4
Yes	275	24.6
Total	**1,117**	**100.0**

When the students were asked if they had difficulty getting through by telephone to the campus Financial Aid Information Service their responses matched the responses given concerning the College Financial Aid Office. Seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated that they had no difficulty in getting through to the campus Financial Aid Information Service,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

while 25% did encounter difficulty getting through by phone (Table 7).

Table 7: Difficulty Contacting the

Campus Financial Aid Information Service By Telephone

Difficulty Contacting Campus Financial Aid Information Service By Telephone	Respondents	
	#	%
No	838	75.3
Yes	275	24.7
Total	**1,113**	**100.0**

Students were asked to specify what kind of difficulty they had when calling NVCC's financial aid services, multiple responses to the question were allowed. Of those respondents who called financial aid services, at either the College or campus locations, 25% indicated they received a recorded message and could not get through to a staff member. Twenty-four percent of the respondents said they were on hold for too long, 18% said they received persistent busy signals and 13% said they called financial aid services and left a message but received no return phone call (Table 8).

Table 8: Difficulties Contacting the Financial Aid Office*

Difficulties Contacting Financial Aid Services (College and Campus)	Number
Persistent busy signals	213 (17.6%)
On hold for too long	285 (23.5%)
Received a recorded message and could not get through to the staff member	300 (24.7%)
Left a voice mail message but did not receive a return call	151 (12.5%)

* Students may have experienced more than one kind of difficulty

When students were asked to rate the helpfulness of the financial aid staff in answering the students' phone calls, the majority rated the staff's helpfulness as either good (44%) or excellent (32%). Nineteen percent of the students rated the staff's helpfulness as fair and 5% rated it as poor (Table 9).

Table 9: Rating of the Helpfulness of Staff in Answering Telephone Calls

Rating	Respondents	
	#	%
Excellent	320	32.4
Good	433	43.8
Fair	186	18.8
Poor	50	5.0
Total	**989**	**100.0**

Section IV: Walk-in Services,

College Financial Aid Office – Forbes Place

Students were asked how many times in the past year that they had visited the College Financial Aid Office. Forty-seven percent of the students indicated that they had not visited the College Financial Aid Office in the past year. Forty-two percent of the respondents had visited between 1 to 3 times and 11% had visited 4 or more times (Table 10).

Table 10: Times Visited the College Financial Aid Office

Number of Visits	Respondents	
	#	%
None	573	46.8
One to three	516	42.2
Four or more	134	11.0
Total	**1,223**	**100.0**

Of those students who had visited the College Financial Aid Office and responded to the question concerning the amount of time they had to wait, 45% waited less then 5 minutes and 41% waited 5 to 15 minutes. Only 6% of the students did not have to wait at all and 8% waited more than 15 minutes (Table 11).

Table 11: Waiting Time, College Financial Aid Office

Waiting Time	Respondents	
	#	%
None	37	6.3
Less than 5 minutes	261	44.5
5 to 15 minutes	239	40.8
More than 15 minutes	49	8.4
Total	**586**	**100.0**

Students were asked to indicate, from a list given on the survey, the reason(s) for their visit(s) to the College Financial Aid Office. The two most common reasons for students to visit the College Financial Aid Office were to check on the application procedure (77%) or to check on the status of their aid request (64%). Forty-five percent of the students indicated that getting help to complete the financial aid application (FAFSA) was one of the reasons they visited the College Financial Aid Office. Thirty-nine percent visited to request forms, 31% wanted to discuss their award package or denial. Less than 20% of the students in each category visited for the following reasons: to check on the disbursement of financial aid (16%), to complete loan counseling (13%), to request scholarship information (12%), to seek information on work study employment (11%), to request a financial aid transcript (10%), to check on the status of an appeal (10%), or to seek debt management counseling (0.6%) (Table 12 and Figure 5).

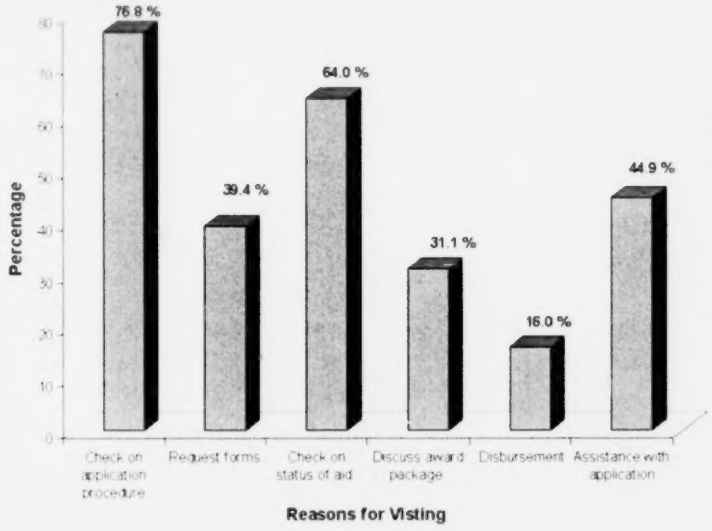
Table 12: Reasons for Visiting the College Financial Aid Office*

Reasons	Number
Check on application procedure	499 (76.8%)
Request forms	256 (39.4%)
Check on status of aid request	415 (64.0%)

Discuss award package or denial	202 (31.1%)
Seek information on work-study employment	72 (11.1%)
Request scholarship information	76 (11.7%)
Check on status of appeal	67 (10.3%)
Complete loan counseling	84 (12.9%)
Seek debt management counseling	4 (0.6%)
Request a Financial Aid transcript	65 (10.0%)
Check on disbursement of financial aid	104 (16.0%)
Get help in completing the financial aid application	292 (44.9%)

* Students may have more than one reason for visiting or visited multiple times

Figure 5: Reasons for Visiting the College Financial Aid Office *



* Figure 5 shows the top six reasons for visiting the College Financial Aid Office.

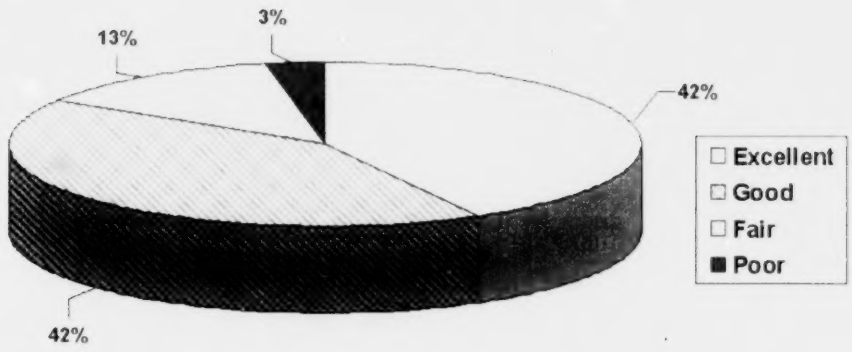
Of those students who visited the College Financial Aid Office, 42% rated the staff's helpfulness as good and 42% rated it as excellent. Thirteen percent of the students rated the staff's helpfulness as fair and 3% said it was poor (Table 13 and Figure 6).

Table 13: Rating of the Helpfulness of Staff in Answering Students' Concerns, College Financial Aid Office

Rating	Respondents	
	#	%
Excellent	260	42.1
Good	261	42.3
Fair	77	12.5
Poor	19	3.1
Total	**617**	**100.0**

Figure 6: Rating of Helpfulness of Staff,

College Financial Aid Office



Section V: Walk-in Services, Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Students were asked how many times in the past year they had visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service on a walk-in basis without an appointment. Of those students who responded to this question (1,514), 61% said they had visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service 1 to 3 times, 24% said they had never visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service and 15% said they had visited 4 or more times (Table 14).

Table 14: Visits to a Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Number of Visits	Respondents	
	#	%
None	365	24.1
One to three	926	61.2
Four or more	223	14.7
Total	**1,514**	**100.0**

Respondents who had visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service reported they usually had to wait before they were helped. Forty-four percent of the respondents said they waited for less than 5 minutes, while 41% said they waited between 5 and 15 minutes. Only 6% of the respondents reported no waiting time and 8% reported waiting more than 15 minutes

(Table 15).

Table 15: Waiting Time, Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Average Waiting Time	Respondents	
	#	%
None	68	6.3
Less than 5 minutes	477	44.1
5 to 15 minutes	447	41.4
More than 15 minutes	89	8.2
Total	**1,081**	**100.0**

Respondents gave multiple responses to the question concerning the reason(s) for their visits to a campus Financial Aid Information Service. The most frequently indicated reason was to check on application procedures (59%), followed by checking on the status of their aid request (41%). Thirty-four percent of the respondents stated that the reason for their visit was to get help to complete the financial aid application and 34% stated that it was to request forms. While 22% of the respondents said they visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service to discuss their award package or denial, 13% went to check on the disbursement of financial aid. Less than 10% of the respondents in each category gave the following as a reason for their visit: to complete loan counseling (9%), to request scholarship information (9%), to seek information on work study employment (8%), to check on the status of their appeal (7%), to request a financial aid transcript (6%) or to seek debt management counseling (0.4%) (Table 16 and Figure 7).

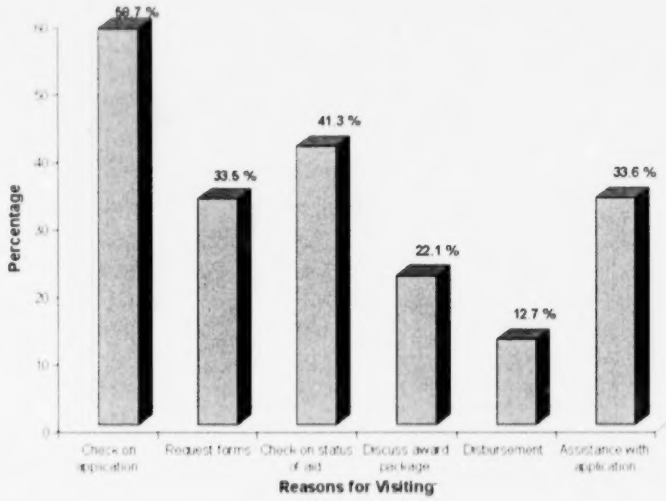
Table 16: Reasons for Visiting a Campus Financial Aid Information Service*

Reasons	Number
Check on application procedure	674 (58.7%)
Request forms	385 (33.5%)
Check on status of aid request	474 (41.3%)
Discuss award package or denial	254

	(22.1%)
Seek information on work-study employment	95 (8.3%)
Request scholarship information	105 (9.1%)
Check on status of appeal	82 (7.1%)
Complete loan counseling	107 (9.3%)
Seek debt management counseling	5 (0.4%)
Request a Financial Aid Transcript	68 (5.9%)
Check on disbursement of financial aid	146 (12.7%)
Get help in completing the financial aid application	386 (33.6%)

* Students may have more than one reason for visiting or visited multiple times

Figure 7: Reasons for Visiting a Campus Financial Aid Information Service



Respondents were asked to rate the campus staff's helpfulness in answering the students' concerns. Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated that the campus staff's helpfulness was good, while 41% said it was excellent and 14% indicated it was fair. Only 3% of the respondents indicated that the staff's helpfulness was poor (Table 17).

Table 17: Rating of the Helpfulness of Staff in Answering Students' Concerns, Campus Financial Aid Information Service

Rating	Respondents	
	#	%
Excellent	436	41.0
Good	450	42.3
Fair	144	13.5
Poor	34	3.2
Total	**1,064**	**100.0**

Comparison of College and Campus Walk-in Financial Aid Services

A comparison of College and campus financial aid services revealed that 650 respondents visited the College Financial Aid Office at least once, while 1,149 students visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service at least once. Forty-seven percent of the respondents said they had not visited the College Financial Aid Office in the past year. In comparison, only 24% of the respondents indicated that they had not visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service in the past year. Sixty-one percent of the respondents indicated they had visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service between one to three times in the past year and

15% said they had visited 4 or more times. Forty-two percent of the respondents had visited the College Financial Aid Office between 1 to 3 times and 11% had visited more than 4 times.

A comparison of the time students had to wait if they did not have a scheduled appointment revealed no differences between the College Financial Aid Office and the campus Financial Aid Information Service. Ninety-four percent of those respondents who visited the College or a campus financial aid service reported that they had to wait to be seen. In addition 8% of respondents at both the College and campus locations reported having to wait more than fifteen minutes.

The reasons for visiting NVCC's financial aid services did not differ between the College office and campus offices. The top three reasons that students visited NVCC's financial aid services remained the same across College and campus locations. Students visited the financial aid services to check on the application procedure, check on the status of their aid request, or to get help in completing the financial aid application.

There were minimal differences in the students' ratings of the helpfulness of financial aid staff in answering the students concerns. At both the College and campus locations students rated the helpfulness of the financial aid staff as either good or excellent.

Section VI: Overall Evaluation of Financial Aid Services

Students were asked to rate their overall experience with NVCC's financial aid services. Of those students who responded to the question, 47% rated their experience as good, while 35% rated it as excellent. Fourteen percent rated their experience as fair and 4% said their overall experience was poor (Table 18).

Table 18: Rating of the Overall Experience With NVCC's Financial Aid Services

Rating	Respondents	
	#	%
Excellent	520	35.0
Good	697	47.0
Fair	201	13.6
Poor	66	4.4
Total	**1,484**	**100.0**

Students who were dissatisfied with any of the services from financial aid services were asked with which one service they were least satisfied. Of the 813 students who reported dissatisfaction with a financial aid service, the greatest proportion (27%) was dissatisfied with the financial aid application process. Fifteen percent of the respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the hours of operation and 14% said they were dissatisfied with the availability

of staff to answer their questions. Twelve percent said they were dissatisfied with the financial aid award package they received and an additional 12% were dissatisfied with the lack of timely correspondence from the College Financial Aid Office. Less than 10% of the respondents, in each case, said they were dissatisfied with the customer service skills of either the phone staff (8%) or the counseling staff (8%) or were dissatisfied with publications (3%) (Table 19).

Table 19: Dissatisfaction With Services

Dissatisfaction With Services	Respondents	
	#	%
The financial aid application process	219	26.9
The financial aid award package that I received	101	12.4
Customer service skills of the receptionist/telephone staff	65	8.0
Customer service skills of the counseling staff	68	8.4
Availability of staff to answer the questions	112	13.8
Hours of operation	125	15.4
Publications	23	2.8
Timely correspondence from the College Financial Aid	100	12.3
Total	**813**	**100.0**

Students were asked to indicate the financial aid related procedures they understood, multiple responses to the question were allowed. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (66%) indicated that they understood how and when to apply for financial aid. Forty-four percent of the respondents indicated they understood how their financial aid was paid to them and 39% indicated they understood how to register when they had financial aid. Twenty-six percent of the respondents said they understood how to get a student loan. Only small percentages of students, in each case, indicated they understood how to apply for scholarships (19%), obtain work study placement (15%), request a loan deferment (10%) or request an emergency grant (5%) (Table 20).

Table 20: Understanding Financial Aid-Related Procedures*

Student Understanding	Number
How and when to apply for financial aid	1,127 (66.0%)
How to apply for scholarships	323

	(18.9%)
How to obtain work-study placement	247 (14.5%)
How your financial aid is paid to you	747 (43.8%)
How to register when you have financial aid	663 (38.8%)
How to get a student loan	436 (25.5%)
How to request a loan deferment	176 (10.3%)
How to request an Emergency Grant	84 (4.9%)

* Students may have understood more than one financial aid-related procedure

The College provides many web services for financial aid applicants and the survey wanted to find out what web services students had used. For the most part, only a small percentage of the respondents indicated they had used web services.

Eighteen percent of the respondents indicated they had applied for financial aid over the web, 11% indicated they had used the web to get information on policies, procedures and programs and 9% had used the web to print a variety of financial aid forms. A very small percentage of respondents indicated they used web services to identify scholarship opportunities at the College or other web sites (6%). In addition, less than 1% of the respondents reported using the web to check on the availability of work study positions at the College (0.6%) or register with the Selective Services Administration (0.4%) (Table 21).

Table 21: College Web Services Used

Web Services	Number	Percentage
Applying for financial aid over the web	304	17.8%
Checking the availability of work-study positions at the College	95	0.6%
Registering with the Selective Service Administration	60	0.4%
Printing a financial aid form	147	8.6%

Information on policies, procedures, and programs	180	10.6%
Identifying scholarship opportunities at the College and other web sites	101	5.9%

Section VII: A Comparison Of Satisfaction Ratings Between Students Who Received And Did Not Receive Financial Aid

Two hundred and forty three (243) students who responded to the Financial Aid Services Survey indicated that they either applied for, but did not receive aid (n=234), or did not apply for financial aid (n=9). OIR analyzed questions on the financial aid survey, where respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with staff or services, to see if the students' aid status impacted their satisfaction ratings.

The majority of those respondents who received or did not receive aid rated staff helpfulness and their overall experience with financial aid as good or excellent. Those students who did not receive aid, however, were more likely to rate financial aid staff's helpfulness and their overall experience with financial aid as fair or poor, compared to those who received financial aid. Conversely, those respondents who received financial aid were more likely to rate their financial aid experience and the staff's helpfulness as good or excellent compared to those who did not receive aid.

When asked to rate the helpfulness of the financial aid staff in answering the students' telephone calls, 40% of the respondents who did not receive aid rated the financial aid staff's helpfulness as fair or poor, while 60% rated staff helpfulness as good or excellent (Table 23). In comparison, only 21% of the respondents who received financial aid rated the staff's helpfulness as fair or poor and 79% rated it as good or excellent (Table 22).

The helpfulness of financial aid staff in answering students' concerns at the College Financial Aid Office was rated as fair or poor by 29% of those respondents who did not receive aid, whereas, 71% said it was good or excellent (Table 23). In contrast, only 13% of those who received aid rated the staff's helpfulness as fair or poor and 87% said it was good or excellent (Table 22).

The helpfulness of financial aid staff at the campus locations was rated as fair or poor by 27% of those respondents who did not receive aid, while 73% indicated it was good or excellent (Table 23). However, only 15% of aid recipients rated campus staff helpfulness as fair or poor and 85% said it was good or excellent (Table 22).

Overall satisfaction with financial aid was very apparent among financial aid recipients. Eighty-five percent of financial aid recipients rated their overall experience with financial aid as either good or excellent, 15% rated it as fair or poor (Table 22). In comparison, of those respondents who did not receive financial aid, 63% rated their overall experience as excellent or good while 37% rated it as fair or poor (Table 23).

Table 22: Satisfaction Ratings For Students Who Received Financial Aid

Financial Aid Services	Excellent/Good		Fair/Poor		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Helpfulness Of Staff In Answering Telephone Calls	654	79.4	170	20.6	824	100.0
Helpfulness Of Staff In Answering Concerns – College Office	447	86.5	70	13.5	517	100.0
Helpfulness Of Staff In Answering Concerns – Campus Office	737	85.1	130	15.0	867	100.0
Overall Experience with Financial Aid Services	1,041	85.4	178	14.6	1,219	100.0

Table 23: Satisfaction Ratings For Students Who Did Not Receive Financial Aid

Financial Aid Services	Excellent/Good		Fair/Poor		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Helpfulness Of Staff In Answering Telephone Calls	83	60.1	55	39.9	138	100.0
Helpfulness Of Staff In Answering Concerns – College Office	58	70.7	24	29.3	82	100.0
Helpfulness Of Staff In Answering Concerns – Campus Office	110	73.3	40	26.7	150	100.0
Overall Experience with Financial Aid Services	131	63.3	76	36.7	207	100.0

The students aid status appeared to impact their ratings of both staff helpfulness and their overall satisfaction with financial aid services. There was a higher degree of satisfaction with financial aid services among those students who received financial aid.

Conclusion

One thousand seven hundred and seven (1,707) students who had been in contact with financial aid services at NVCC, between fall 1998 and summer 1999, responded to a student satisfaction survey on financial aid services. The Financial Aid Services Survey sought to determine student satisfaction with a variety of services and information provided by NVCC's financial aid services. Students were asked from where they got financial aid information and about the telephone and walk-in services they received from financial aid services. Students were also asked to evaluate staff helpfulness and their overall experience with financial aid services at NVCC.

While students may have received more than one type of financial aid, findings from the survey indicate the most frequently mentioned source of aid was a grant. Students indicated they received information about financial aid from a variety of sources such as College publications and College staff.

Most of the respondents had telephoned NVCC's financial aid services at least once in the past year and indicated that they would prefer to receive financial aid information either in person (by appointment) or by telephone. Overall, interactive methods of receiving information were less popular with the respondents than the more traditional methods of communicating.

The majority of respondents indicated they had no difficulty in getting through by telephone to either the College Financial Aid office or to a campus Financial Aid Information Service. Of those students who reported difficulty in getting through to financial aid services, the greatest proportion said they received a recorded message and could not get through to a staff member.

Over half of the respondents had visited the College Financial Aid Office and over three-quarters had visited a campus Financial Aid Information Service. Most of the students who made an unscheduled visit to either the College Financial Aid Office or a campus Financial Aid Information Service had to wait to be seen. One of the main reasons that students contacted NVCC's financial aid services, either by phone or in person, was to check on the application procedure. Students consistently rated the helpfulness of the financial aid staff as good or excellent, regardless of whether that information was received by phone or in person. In addition, the financial aid staff was rated as good or excellent in their helpfulness, regardless of whether they were at the College or a campus location.

Students rated their overall experience with financial aid as either good or excellent. Of those students who reported dissatisfaction with a financial aid service, the greatest proportion was dissatisfied with the financial aid application process. When asked about the financial aid procedures they understood, two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they understood how and when to apply for financial aid. Only a small proportion of the respondents used College web services for financial aid.

The students aid status appeared to impact their ratings of both staff helpfulness and their overall satisfaction with financial aid services. There was a higher degree of satisfaction with financial aid services among those students who received financial aid than among those students who did not receive financial aid.

The findings of the Financial Aid Services Survey indicate students are satisfied with the financial aid services they receive from NVCC. Students consistently rated financial aid staffs' helpfulness as good or excellent. In addition, students rated their overall experience with financial aid as good or excellent.

Appendix

In July 1997, Financial Aid Services at NVCC were restructured. The current structure consists of a College Financial Aid Office and five campus Financial Aid Information Service Offices, one located at each campus. The five campus locations of Financial Aid Services report to the

Deans of Student Development at their respective campuses. The director of Financial Aid and Support Services at the College Financial Aid Office reports to the Dean of Academic and Student Services.

When financial aid services at NVCC were restructured in July 1997, a realignment of services occurred at both the college and campus level. The College Financial Aid Office was the focal point for student inquiries by telephone or Internet and the campus assumed the role of providing direct in-person customer service. Campus interactions were targeted at assisting students with completion and correction of the financial aid applications, determining appropriate levels for borrowing, information and preparation of appeals to financial aid, work-study placements, providing scholarship information and assisting students with financial emergencies. The method of working with students would be primarily in person at the campus.

The College Financial Aid Office became the operational center for financial aid charged with the administration and management of the programs, determinations of eligibility, correspondence with students, development of paper and web-based publications for information and the delivery of financial aid, reporting, and other matters related to program compliance. Staffing was provided to support telephone interactions with students with little consideration given to providing in-person assistance to students. Response to students via the telephone is focused on specific, technical questions, changes in enrollment, coordination of external resources, and disbursement matters.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COLLEGE MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to respond to the educational needs of its dynamic and diverse constituencies through an array of comprehensive programs and services that facilitate learning and workforce development in an environment of open access and through lifelong educational opportunities.

To achieve this mission, the following strategic goals for 1999-2001 are established:

I. Sustain and Strengthen Academic Quality and Teaching Excellence.
II. Enhance the Quality of Services to Students.
III. Expand the Integration of Technology in Instruction and Administration.
IV. Increase Access to College Programs and Services.
V. Improve the Quality of Institutional Communication.
VI. Strengthen Programs That Help Build a World Class Workforce.
VII. Promote Responsiveness to Diversity of Students and Employees.

VIII. Strengthen and Develop Additional Linkages with Community Groups.
IX. Integrate College Planning and Facility Requirements.
X. Enhance the Overall Wellness of Our Working and Living Environments.